

Chapter 11: Communications

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■ Communications: Key to Successful Implementation

The Washington Management Service calls for a new way of thinking when it comes to personnel actions affecting WMS managers. Gone is the familiar, structured system of job bulletins, registers, referrals, job classes, salary ranges, and the like, and in its place is a flexible system where recruitment, hiring, compensation, and similar decisions are tailored to the needs of the individual agency, position, and employee. This drastic change requires a paradigm shift for WMS managers, human resource professionals, and the executive level managers who supervise WMS positions.

As with any significant change, communication and involvement are the keys to successful implementation of the WMS. To fully understand and accept the changes, all of the affected parties need access to all of the available information, and they need to have an opportunity to participate in the development and implementation process.

DOP Communications

Recognizing the importance of communications to the successful development and implementation of the WMS, the Department of Personnel has put together a communications program that is designed to reach all of the affected parties. The following is a summary of the communication methods that were used in the initial stages and those that are ongoing:

- Task force participation from 40 state agency program managers, personnel professionals, and union representatives to develop the framework for the WMS rules and guides.
- Presentations made to Legislative committees, Cabinet meetings, and agency executive meetings.
- Discussion sessions held around the state, with more than 1,500 potential WMS managers participating.
- *WMS Update* newsletter published frequently and distributed to all affected employees.
- Frequent meetings with human resource managers.
- Handbook and other support materials for human resource professionals.
- Other informational brochures and guidebooks.

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Agency Communications

While DOP provides informational pieces of a general nature, a large portion of the information about WMS needs to be generated and distributed at the agency level. Each agency has a lot of flexibility in how WMS is implemented. Employees want information on how the WMS changes affect them; which means that they need to know about the WMS policies and procedures within their particular agency.

The following are some suggestions and considerations for agency internal communications:

- Who are our target audiences?
 - WMS Managers
 - Supervisors of WMS Managers
 - Agency executive management
 - General Service employees
- What information do they need/want?
- What is the best method for communicating with our target audiences?
 - Internal agency newsletters
 - Memos, information bulletins, etc.
 - Other printed materials
 - Meetings, training sessions, discussion sessions
 - Task force involvement
- What role should our public information office play? How can we work together for better communications?

For questions, suggestions, or requests relating to WMS communications, call the DOP communications office at (360) 586-0402.

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